PROTESTANCY To be Embrac'd:

OR, A

New and Infallible Method

To Reduce

ROMANISTS,

FROM

POPERY

TO

Protestancy.

A Treatise of great Use to all His Majesties Subjects, and necessary to prevent Error and Popery.

By *David Abercromby* D.

Lately Converted, after he had Profess'd near Nineteen Years Jesuitism and Popery.

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TO THE

Right Reverend Father in God,

HENRY,

LORD BISHOP of *London*, Dean of His Majesties Chappel, and one of His most Honourable Privy Council.

My Lord,

I *Was once fully resolved to side first openly with the Protestant Church,*

and then to inform the Publick of the true motives of my Converſion from Popery *to* Proteſtancy; *but upon ſecond thoughts*, ad obſtruendum os loquentium iniqua, *to ſtop the mouths of ſuch as could miſconſtrue my intentions*, *I judg'd it neceſſary to prevent the reflections of ſome, and ſurpriſal of others.*

I acknowledge my ſelf in this Conjuncture Accountable by duty to two ſorts of perſons: 1. *To the Jeſuites my former Brethren.*

thren. 2. *To the Roman Catholicks of my familiar acquaintance: I was looked upon by those as being able to serve them at home, as I had not been useless to them abroad, and by these as a zealous Defender of Popery. If I can but allay the first heats of both, and hinder a sudden rise of anger and passion, I may hope by this peaceable method to conquer irresistibly their understandings, yea, if preoccupation stand not betwixt them and the truth,*

ſtrike at their hearts, and change their wills.

My Thoughts, my Lord, were not long at a ſtand, under whoſe Patronage this ſhort Treatiſe ſhould face the Publick, it being chiefly intended for the Conſervation of the Proteſtant Religion, and Converſion of His Majeſties Subjects from Superſtition and Popery, I was of opinion you could claim a peculiar right to it, not only on the account of your Character and Dignity, but particularly becauſe

of that Apostolick zeal you are inflam'd withall for your Flocks spiritual Concerns and Proficiency; whereby you are powerfully moved to accept of, and defend whatever may prove instrumental to the increase of true Virtue and Christian Piety.

I confess ingenuously, your Deep Knowledge makes me somewhat apprehensive of your Censure, but your eminent Virtue puts me in hopes again you will easily pardon whatever you

ſhall find defective in this method, or not anſwerable to your own Accuracy. Yet I have call'd it, and hope it ſhall prove ſuch, infallible for two Reaſons. 1. *Becauſe taken wholly, it amounts to a clear and forcible Demonſtration, though perhaps each Argument it contains will not prove a full Conviction to every obſtinate Romaniſt.* 2. *Becauſe it relies on Self-evident Principles, and overthrows the moſt material Obſtacles to the Converſion of Romaniſts,*

nists, I mean their preoccupated Opinions, and groundless Fancies, That Protestants are all Reprobates, Schismaticks, Hereticks, and such as retreat from Popery to Protestancy, Apostates; but however this method prove otherwise infallible, which the event must determine; one thing I may confidently ascertain, it will shew infallibly to Posterity, with what respect I am,

MY LORD,
Your most Humble
And Obedient Servant,
David Abercromby.

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Proteſtancy
To be embrac'd:
OR
An Infallible Method
to reduce *Romaniſts*
From
Popery to *Proteſtancy*.

1. THis little Treatiſe will be a Subject of great amazement to all ſuch as have known my former Life and Converſation, whereof courteous and curious Reader, take this accurate, ſhort, and true account.

2. I was bred up in my greener years at *Doway*, and in a ſhort time became ſo good a Proficient in the myſteries of Popery, that I enter'd the Order of Jeſuits in *France* at my firſt inſtance: I lived amongſt them full eighteen years and more, and I may ſay, without vanity, in ſome eſteem and repute of a Scholar being judg'd after a ſolemn examen, capable to teach Divinity and Philoſophy in the moſt renown'd Univerſities of *Europe*, which is the Jeſuits way of Graduating their own men in Divinity. I taught in *France* Grammar, in *Lorrain* Mathematicks and Philoſophy; and being graduate in Phyſick,

ſick, I practis'd it not unhappily, and intend to practiſe it hereafter, with certain hopes, God willing of the ſame good ſucceſs.

3. All this while I ſtudied more to the endowment of the intellective faculty by humane Sciences, than to perfect my will by ſolid Vertues and Piety: To which I thought the School-divinity, as taught by Romaniſts, was not a ſmall hinderance: The ſpeculative part thereof, being apter to beget doubts of the truth of Chriſtianiſm, than to clear thoſe that men may, and do ſometimes frame to themſelves.

4. Take for inſtance, they call in queſtion and diſpute,

if the Incarnation of God was poſſible or not ; if God can lye or ſpeak a falſhood ; if it be within the reach of his Omnipotency to condemn an Innocent ſoul to the pains of everlaſting flames; if his actual exiſtency can be clearly proved, or pointed out by the light of a true demonſtration, and the like: Such diſputes I ever thought, *Otioſorum hominum negotia*, the affairs of thoſe that have no affair to buſie themſelves withal ; I judg'd them fitter to deſtroy than edifie, to nouriſh and ſpread Errors, than to increaſe Piety and diſpell Ignorance.

5. I ſtudied ſeveral years the Jeſuit School-divinity, and

and I may ſay in all truth, I reap'd no other benefit thereby, ſave only that in my own conceit, and perhaps in the opinion of ſome others, I became an able Diſputant, about what? About Chymera's, beings of reaſon, as they ſpeak, Impoſſibilities, and ſuch like whimſical notions.

6. Yet in the midſt of theſe hot diſputes we had often for meer Punctilo's of honour, and a vain repute of ſome ſharpneſs, I felt often the Spirit of God working interiourly my Converſion, by the ſecret voice of his Holy Inſpiration, which caus'd me often to break out in theſe or the like words: *Quid hæc ad æternitatem?* What avails all

this for my laſt end and eternal felicity.

7. As to the practical part of the Romiſh School-divinity, relating to Caſes of Conſcience, the World knows how far from a true and ſincere Conſcience are thoſe men commonly called Caſuiſts: I read ſeveral of them moſt exactly, but was ſtill diſpleas'd at their far fetch'd ſubtilties, invented for the avoiding of ſin, but in reality are the true ſources of all looſneſs and iniquity: Whatever crime your Conſcience accuſeth you of, conſult but a Romiſh Caſuiſt, and he will inſtantly indeavour your repoſe by ſome byaſs or another tending to his own intereſt; and the ſetling

ling of your inward peace on ſome frivolous diſtinction, or groundleſs preciſion.

8. Such ſort of men are great Patrons of ſelf-love, and always prone to pronounce in favour of our corrupted nature againſt the light of their own Conſcience and Reaſon, and under pretence of ſhunning ſeverity, they fall into th' other extream, more dangerous, by yielding through an intereſs'd complacency to the perverſe Inclinations of ſuch as requirs their advice.

9. I had great intimacy with ſeveral Romaniſts perſwaded of the lawfulneſs of ſuch immoral Practices; their common by-word was, *Les*

gens d'eſprit ne pechent point, that is witty men hardly ever ſin: Their reaſon was, becauſe ſin, for inſtance Adultery, may be look'd on as a double fac'd medal; the one ſide whereof repreſents to us a natural act, th' other ſide an injuſt act; their meaning is, if you conſent to an Adultery as 'tis a natural act preciſely, you ſhun by this preciſion the guilt of ſin, ſince an act as natural is not ſinful, but if you conſent to it as 'tis an injuſt act, you commit then a ſin, which witty and ſharp men, eſpecially Caſuiſts, I fancy will never do, knowing how to diſtinguiſh in the ſame individual act, *rationem actus*, *& rationem peccati*, the for-

formality of an act, from that of a ſinful act.

10. So the dultiſh ſort only, either incapable of, or not reflecting on ſuch preciſions, ſhall commit Adulteries, or any other ſins for want of this preſcinding faculty: Than which no greater illuſion could I ever conceive, as to commit a ſin were not more than enough to deſire an ill thing, or what is neceſſarily tyed to an ill and unlawful object known to be ſuch.

11. Theſe and the like dangerous opinions which we ſhall diſcuſs in another place, put often my thoughts to a ſtand, in order to examine what truth could be in

theſe ordinary reproaches made by *Proteſtants* againſt *Romaniſts*, aceus'd commonly by them of diſconformity with the Primitive Church of Novelties, Errors, and Superſtitions.

12. Being thus perplex'd in mind and as *Hercules* in *Bivio*, uncertain what way to make choice of, I came to *Scotland*, where becauſe of ſome repute I had got abroad of a Scholar, I was put inſtantly to work by the Jeſuits; againſt *M. Menzeis*, Doctor and Profeſſor of Divinity in *Aberdeen*. I wrote then in a ſhort time a Treatiſe of ſome bulk againſt his way of defending the *Proteſtant Religion*, but neither to my own ſatis-

tisfaction, though ſeveral others ſeeing things but under one light, ſeem'd to be perſwaded by my arguments, nor to the ſatisfaction of moſt *Romaniſts*, who thought and ſaid my Doctrine in ſome material points was not unlike, or the ſame with that of *Proteſtants*.

13. After a ſtay of about two years in *Scotland*, after an accurate parallel of Proteſtancy and Popery, and a ſcrupulous ſcrutiny of the moſt material grounds they both ſtand on, I came to *London* as to a ſafe Sanctuary, where I might ſerve God in all freedom and ſecurity.

14. The extream kindneſs of the *Londoners* to all diſtreſs'd Perſons, and their late unparallelable Charity to the Perſecuted Brethren of the *French* Nation, could not but inſpire me with high ſentiments of their Piety and Religion.

15. I muſt confeſs here ingenuouſly, that the *Engliſh* Nation, exceeded not only formerly their Neighbours in Warlike Exploits, and would yet, if times and occaſion put them to it, but were ever, and are ſtill far beyond them all in beneficency and works of Charity, the genuine Characters of Divine Faith and true Chriſtianiſm influenc'd no doubt by the example

ple of our moſt wiſe and moſt Gracious Soveraign, who as he defends and conſerves by all imaginable means the *Proteſtant Religion*, ſo favours all ſuch with his Royal Protection and Friendſhip, that conform to it, by renouncing their Errors and Popery.

16. I foreſee this change of mine, how well grounded ſoever, will ſtir up againſt me. 1. My former Brethren, the Jeſuits. 2. My neareſt Relations, who are for the moſt part, and ever were Zealous Romaniſts: I doubt not nevertheleſs but they ſhall put a favourable conſtruction on what I have done; provided 1. They condemn me not,

incog-

incognitâ causâ, unheard, and 2. Suſpend their cenſure till after an impartial, and intire peruſal of this preſent Treatiſe, all preoccupation Mother of error laid aſide.

17. They cannot ſay that any other motive but that of ſaving my Soul in the ſecureſt way, caus'd me to withdraw from them, and ſide with *Proteſtants:* They know I was in a Condition amongſt them to want for nothing, being ſupplyed with neceſſaries ſufficiently; but now I muſt rely on Gods Providence and my own Induſtry. Yet this I am not troubled at, ſince Chriſt has ſaid, Search firſt after the Kingdom of Heaven, and then all other

things

things ye ſtand in need of, ſhall be added unto you: Since he can neither deceive nor be deceiv'd, may we either think or ſay without Blaſphemy, he will diſappoint ſuch as have ſetled all their hopes in his infallible promiſes; but to ſhun Prolixity, I come to the main point I aim at, which is to give to the publick an infallible method, not written of for ought I know by any other, to reduce Romaniſts to Conformity with the Reform'd Churches: By the ſame means I ſhall lay open to the World on what grounds I have forſaken Popery and embrac'd Proteſtancy.

18. This

18. This method to be ſuch as 'tis deſign'd, ſhall be 1. Plain, that every one may underſtand it. 2. Peaceable, that the will may be gain'd, and by it the underſtanding ſweetly conquer'd. 3. Short, that it may be proportionable to the leiſure of the moſt buſied, and none through Prolixity loth to read it: All this I hope I ſhall perform to the ſatisfaction of *Proteſtants* and Conviction of *Romaniſts*, if I make out with the clearneſs of a Noon Sun-ſhine:

1. That *Proteſtants* may be ſaved.

2. That they may be ſaved more eaſily, and with greater ſecurity than thoſe of the Romiſh perſwaſion.

19. The

19. The firſt of theſe Principles proved, will cauſe Romaniſts to look upon *Proteſtants* with a brotherly Love and Charity; the ſecond once eſtabliſh'd, will force them ſweetly but irreſiſtably to ſide with them, as to matters of Religion and Divine Worſhip; ſince they are perſwaded in a buſineſs of ſuch a weighty moment, as is that of our Everlaſting Happineſs: *Tutius ſemper eſt eligendum*, the ſafeſt muſt ſtill be preferred before what is leſs ſecure.

20. This Treatiſe ſhall contain three ſhort Articles; in the two firſt, I ſhall prove evidently to all Impartial Readers, the forementioned truths;

truths; in the laſt we ſhall raiſe ſuch inferences as flow naturally from theſe two foregoing Principles.

ARTIC.

ARTICLE I.

PRINCIPLE I.

That Proteſtants may be ſaved.

SECT. I.

1. NOthing makes *Romaniſts* more averſe from *Proteſtants*, than this groundleſs perſwaſion of theirs, that *Proteſtants* cannot be ſaved, this is the ſole cauſe of their obſtinacy in Popery; the true

true ſource of their immortal hatred againſt us, and the very root of theſe extream Rigors they have practis'd againſt *Proteſtants*, where-ever they happen'd to be abſolute Maſters: This pitiful miſtake wherein I liv'd ſeveral years, was as a veil before my eyes, hindering me to ſee the truth, which now by the Grace of God I ſee clearly.

2. Becauſe this Principle is of great moment for the Converſion of *Romaniſts*, I ſhall prove it to perſwaſion in two different ways.

1. Poſitively, by poſitive and evincing Reaſons.

2. Negatively, by ſhewing there can be no let or hinderance of Salvation, to

to ſuch as profeſs *Proteſtancy.*

3. I can imagine but two things neceſſary to Salvation, or the attaining of Eternal Felicity.

The Firſt is to live conformably to the Law of God, becauſe he is what he is, our Soveraign Lord and Maſter.

The Second is, to live conformably to the lawful Commands of ſuch men as have their Authority deriv'd from him, as the firſt Lawgiver; ſuch are Kings, Magiſtrates, Princes, and all Superiors whatſoever, in their reſpective degrees of Superiority, and Authority.

4. As

4. As to the firſt point, what people in the World profeſſeth a more ſincere allegiance to God, or a more ſcrupulous obſervance of his Holy Law, than the Reformed Churches do? So as of old it was ſaid, *Notus in judæâ Deus*, that God was known particularly to the Jews, we may ſay in all truth of them; there is no where ſuch a general knowledge, whether practical, or ſpeculative of his Holy Law, as amongſt *Proteſtants*; they read it in their Churches, they interpret it in their Pulpits, they peruſe it in their Families, they make it the Subject of their private Meditations, of their more ſerious Converſations:

The

The Star they guide themſelves by through the ſtormy Sea of this World is no other but Gods Infallible written Word, whereunto they conform; or which is all one for my intent, they ought by their Principles, to conform their Thoughts, Words, and all their Actions: Is it than conſiſtent with reaſon, to exclude from a capacity of Eternal Felicity, ſuch as not relying upon uncertain Traditions, regulate all their ſteps by the rule of God's Infallible Word? Let us lay aſide our own particular fancys, and renounce our too partial and preoccupated Judgments, and we ſhall inſtantly pronounce in their favour

vour not a little diſcontent, and amaz'd at our former uncharity and groſs miſtakes.

5. Their Doctrine relating to our allegiance due to all Superiors, is ſo wholeſome and peaceable, that I can imagine none more ſubſervient to the intereſt of Princes; they are infinitely averſe, and with all reaſon from that irrational opinion of moſt *Romaniſt Divines*; who teach the Pope of *Rome* has power to Depoſe Princes, when it pleaſeth him to fancy they are Hereticks: Whether they give a direct authority to the Pope over Kings, which is no leſs than to enſlave all Crown'd Heads to the Biſhop

nop of *Rome*, or an indirect one, only to depoſe Princes in certain Junctures,' tis clear they take from *Cæſar* what is *Cæſar*'s, that independency on all earthly power, God has allowed him here on Earth. Princes are accountable to the King of Kings for all their actions, and we to them, if we forget ſo far our duty, as to refuſe them due allegiance. This Doctrine being confeſs'd and profeſs'd by all true *Proteſtants*, can we either think or ſay they are Reprobates, or not in the way to Heav'n?

6. To baniſh ſuch an unchriſtian fancy far from your thoughts, remember what is ſaid in Scripture, God illu-

vour not a little diſcontent, and amaz'd at our former uncharity and groſs miſtakes.

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6. To baniſh ſuch an unchriſtian fancy far from your thoughts, remember what is ſaid in Scripture, God illu-

minates all men, *illuminat omnem hominem*, for what end? For no other but that by this light they may diſcover the way to their laſt end; if all men be thus illuminated, are *Proteſtants* excepted? Are they not men, and moſt of them great examples of vertue and piety?

7. I wonder'd often to hear *Romaniſts* grant ſuch as ſhall never hear of Chriſt and his Goſpel, were nevertheleſs in a capacity to ſave their Souls, provided they lived conformably to the dictates of right reaſon: I was amaz'd I ſay, to hear them confeſs this, and ſo inconſequentially deny the ſame to *Proteſtants*; but what can we expect from preoccu-

occupated *judgments*, but in juſt Cenſures, uncharitable Reflexions, and illegal Concluſions?

8. I deſire them here to conſider that no people in the World hath higher ſentiments of God, and lower of themſelves, than thoſe of the Reform'd Churches: Which are confeſſedly the beſt Diſpoſitions can be imagin'd, to render us capable of that end we were created for. They neither rely on the Mediation and Merits of Saints, nor on their own good works, they ground all their hopes of Salvation on the precious blood of Chriſt, ſhed for us upon the Altar of the Croſs, they exalt highly by all their principles, Gods

infinite goodneſs and mercy ever acknowledging when they have done all they can, they are but uſeleſs Servants, and that all their ſufficiency floweth from that overflowing Fountain of all power, goodneſs, and mercy.

9. And if without faith 'tis impoſſible to pleaſe God, we have all reaſon to ſay they are moſt acceptable to his eyes, ſince they ſhow by their works their Faith is a ſaving and living Faith. Who-ever hath convers'd with them more intimately, and will peak impartially what he ſ.hinks of their Life and Converſation, ſhall eaſily aſſent to this, and confeſs ingenuouſly they are the beſt repreſenta-

ſentatives of the Primitive Chriſtians, ſo real you ſhall find them in their intentions, ſo ſincere in their words, and upright in all their procedures.

10. How than can *Romaniſts* without the guilt of an extream uncharity, impoſe ſo pitifully upon the ignorant ſort, cauſing them to believe on their bare word and authority, without the leaſt rational inducement imaginable, that no *Proteſtants* are Elects, that to be a Reprobate and a *Proteſtant*, is one and the ſame thing? Are they God's Counſellors? Adviſeth he with them who is to be ſaved, and who not? If a raſh judgment be a ſin, as un-

doubtedly 'tis, they are not innocent, when raſhly and upon groundleſs grounds, they condemn ſo unmercifully their Neighbours, who are as good, if not better than themſelves.

11. Believe they not all the Fundamental points, whatever is contain'd in the Creeds and Scripture? And if acts of Divine Love have been ever thought neceſſary, and ſufficient means to the attaining of our laſt end; where ſhall we find a greater aptitude, and better diſpoſitions to ſuch acts, than amongſt Proteſtants?

12. As *Ignoti nulla cupido*, There is no Love without Knowledge: The more knowledge

ledge we have of, and the greater perfections we diſcover in the object we tye our hearts to, our love is ordinarily ſo much the more ardent. The Reformed Churches have this advantage above all others: They read the Scriptures, and command them to be read by all their Subjects; whereby they attain to a high knowledge of Gods infinite Power, Clemency, Wisdom, Mercy, and his other attributes: Their underſtanding thus enlightned, their will takes eaſily fire, and burns with a flame of true Divine Love: The Origine whereof, is no other but that not ordinary knowledge of God they attain to

by reading often and meditating frequently his infallible Word: Which I know certainly to be wanting amongſt *Romaniſts*, becauſe of their ſlight performance, or rather intire neglect of ſuch a Chriſtian duty.

13. Out of theſe foregoing reflexions the Charitable and Impartial Reader may eaſily gather, they go ſtreight on their Journey, and not one ſtep out of the way, who forſaking *Popery* imbrace *Proteſtancy*; and if any *Romaniſt* doubt yet of this ſelf-evident truth, I ſhall be at the pains to convince him once more, by an argument beyond the reach either of a rational anſwer or flat denyal, it runs thus, *ad hominem*. 14.

14. The learnedeſt ſort o *Romaniſts* teach it lawful and ſecure in Conſcience to ſquare our actions by the rule of a probable opinion, yea the Jeſuits hold it ſafe, to ſtand to that opinion which is leſs ſure, and participates leſs of probability than the oppoſite, though in reality ſurer and more probable; their reaſon is, becauſe a man ſo doing, acts prudently, and conſequently ſins not.

15. But the main and material point, is to know what is underſtood by a probable opinion: The Romaniſts generally, and I think none can deny it, mean by a probable opinion, that which learned and pious men hold and follow:

low: For if they be pious, godlineſs and piety will be their ſole aim in all their practices; if learned, they will believe nothing without ſufficient grounds and good reaſon; this definition of a probable opinion laid as a confeſs'd Principle and immoveable ground-ſtone, I build thereon this enſuing, clear, and ſhort Diſcourſe.

16. Who-ever follows a probable opinion, ſins not, does neither raſhly, nor imprudently, but who holds that *Proteſtants* may be ſaved, follows a probable opinion, *ergo*, he ſins not, he neither does raſhly nor imprudently in ſo doing. The ſecond propoſition I prove, *argu-*

mento

mento ad hominem, invincibly thus, that opinion is probable which is believed, and defended by learned and pious men, that *Proteſtants* may be ſaved, 'tis believ'd and defended by learned and pious men, *ergo* 'tis a probable opinion, and by a neceſſary inference may be followed and believ'd without the leaſt appearance either of ſin, raſhneſs, or imprudence.

17. The middle propoſition is not unlike to a ſelf-evident principle, and on this account can be denyed by none as have their Wits about them, or ſo much of common ſence and underſtanding as to ſee through the

the terms 'tis enounc'd in: Dare they ſay *Proteſtants* are neither pious, nor learned?

Auditum *admiſſi riſum teneatis amici.*

I am perſwaded they will be aſham'd of ſuch a childiſh and groundleſs anſwer: For if they be neither pious nor learned, they muſt then both be wicked and ignorant, I know no middle, this muſt be their inference, which is ſo pitiful that the meer recital of ſuch an extravagancy is a full and intire refutation thereof, *enarraſſe, refutaſſe eſt.*

18. But

18. But ſure I am, they will grant willingly their own Divines to be both pious and learned men, yet they teach, and I was taught by them, that all *Proteſtants* are not Reprobates: To underſtand this 'tis obſervable they diſtinguiſh two ſorts of *Proteſtants*, the one they call material, and th' other we may call for diſtinction's ſake, formal. The Material *Proteſtants* are bred up in an invincible ignorance of what the *Romaniſts* think neceſſary to Salvation, as the belief of Tranſubſtantiation, of Purgatory, and the like: In an Ignorance, I ſay, invincible, becauſe living in the midſt of *Proteſtants*, they are ſuppo-

ſed

ſed to want all opportunity of inſtruction, and ſo muſt rely on their Paſtors authority: To theſe they extend their charity, and grant they may be ſaved; they are not ſo merciful to th' others, who live they ſay in a vincible ignorance of Catholick truths, which they may eaſily diſpel and overcome, but will not through wilfulneſs and obſtinacy.

19. But to ſuch alſo I ſhall cauſe them to be favourable, and by a parity of reaſon, *paritate rationis*, force them to impart, will they, nill, they a part of their Charity: Becauſe generals produce not ſuch a clear knowledge as particulars do, I ſhall take this

this particular, the Tranſubſtantiation, for inſtance: The belief of this myſtery, ſayes the *Romaniſt*, is neceſſary to Salvation, yet confeſſeth a Material *Proteſtant* may be ſaved without it, becauſe he liveth in an invincible ignorance, occaſion'd by his want of opportunity to be inſtructed: But the Formal *Proteſtant* upon another account liveth likewiſe in an invincible ignorance of this neceſſity, becauſe the Reaſons he is convinc'd by are ſtronger in his opinion than yours, and ſo you ſhall never influence him by your arguments to believe, acknowledge, or underſtand the contrary; what then the

want

want of inſtruction or underſtanding worketh in the Material *Proteſtants*, this wit effectuates in thoſe whom for method's ſake we have called formal: If thoſe, I mean the former, be guiltleſs, becauſe hearing nothing of Tranſubſtantiation, they cannot aſſent to the exiſtency thereof, theſe are not to be blamed, for though they hear of ſuch a myſtery, yet their underſtanding is conquer'd by lights deſtructive to it, which diſcovering to them clearly the truth of this Negative, *there is no Tranſubſtantiation*, remove far from their intellective faculty, the knowledge of this Poſitive, *there is a Tranſubſtantiation.*

20. I ſay then they are not to be blam'd, becauſe 'tis not in the power of the will to force upon our underſtanding the belief of a known falſhood, or of what appears to us evidently falſe; to conclude as I have begun, *paritate rationis*, by a parity of reaſon, ſince the *Romaniſts*, becauſe of the foreſaid invincible ignorance, grant to ſome *Proteſtants* a capacity of being ſaved, unleſs they belye themſelves, they will not refuſe the ſame to thoſe in whom we meet with a like invincible ignorance, yea more and harder to be overcome, as may appear by what I have ſaid.

21. I foreſee the *Romaniſt* may reply, that thoſe *Proteſtants* he hath no charity for, are ſuch as reſiſt the known truth, for inſtance, they are perſwaded the arguments in favour of Tranſubſtantiation are better grounded than theſe, they oppoſe againſt it: So they ſhall not be ſaved through their own misbelief, wilfulneſs, and obſtinacy in error: To which I make this ſhort and ſatisfactory anſwer, that ſuch men are not true *Proteſtants* of whom only we ſpeak, but rather abominable Hypocrites profeſſing outwardly a Doctrine they judge in their hearts falſe and erroneous. This Objection than vaniſheth,

eth, as being *de ſubjecto non ſupponente*, grounded on a falſe ſuppoſition.

SECT. II.

1. I Have proved poſitively, and I think to perſwaſion, if preoccupation be laid aſide, the undeniable truth of my firſt Principle, that *Proteſtants* may be ſaved: For the Readers intire ſatisfaction, I ſhall make out the ſame in a Negative way, by ſhowing to all not willfully blind, there can be no let or hinderance to their Salvation; what-ever *Romaniſts* can inſtance as inconſiſtent

ſiſtent with their attaining to eternal happineſs, may be reduc'd either to Schiſm or Hereſie, and that either jointly or ſeverally: After an impartial ſcrutiny of their beſt grounds of ſuch foul aſperſions, I found them all to be groundleſs, unwarrantable, and inſufficient.

2. Schiſm is a ſeparation from the true Church of God, *Proteſtants* are not ſeparated from the true Church of God, *ergo*, they are not guilty of Schiſm, they are not Schiſmaticks: All generally confeſs the Chriſtians of the three firſt Centuries, to have been the conſtituent Members of Chriſt's true Church; from theſe the *Proteſtants* are not ſepara-

ſeparated either in belief manners, or Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline, this I could prove to the conviction of the moſt obſtinate, had it not been perform'd abundantly, and more than once by others: The ſame cannot be ſaid of the *Romaniſts*, ſince they have admitted of many novelties never heard of in theſe Primitive times, ſuch are in invocation of Saints, adoration of the conſecrated Wafer, Image-worſhip, Popes Supremacy, *&c.* So if they ſtand to the ſame Fundamentals with the Church in her pureſt age, 'tis certain they have added thereunto, and are guilty of divers Superſtructures which the *Proteſtants*

ſtants were never, and cannot be accus'd of: But 'tis not ſo much my deſign in this place to charge *Romaniſts*, as to juſtifie *Proteſtants*, and thoſe who embrace Proteſtancy.

3. They will perhaps ſay we are Schiſmaticks, becauſe ſeparated from the Church of *Rome*: But

1. The Church of *Rome* is a particular one, and a member only of the Univerſal Church.

2. As it now ſtands, 'tis not our rule, but that undoubted of Chriſtian Church in the Primitive times without ſpot or blemiſh.

3. This

3. This aſperſion of Schiſm ſmites rather themſelves ; For thoſe only we call Schiſmaticks who are guilty of diviſion and breach of unity, by doing that which is the true cauſe thereof: That the meaneſt capacities may underſtand this, let them take notice of what follows: If my body were united or cloſely joining to yours, would ye not be judg'd the true cauſe of our ſeparation, if ye put any thing between you and me hindring this union? ſo you are the true Separatiſt, not I, becauſe you have thruſt me from you by that middle Obſtacle you have plac'd betwixt us both, which unleſs firſt removed, I can-

cannot unite my body to yours again.

4. This is downright our preſent caſe if well underſtood: The *Proteſtants* and *Romaniſts* were once two united bodies in the pure age of the Church, in theſe happy times when Superſtition had not as yet gain'd a foot of ground amongſt Chriſtians, they were one People, *anima una corum*, one Soul, and one Heart: But at length the *Romaniſts* ſet up betwixt us and them, *murum aheneum*, an invincible obſtacle, a heap of errors deſtructive both to union and unity, ſo if we be ſeparated now, who were formerly united, 'tis evidently by their fault we could

not perſevere in union with them becauſe of this middle wall that did ſeparate us, let them throw it down as they are oblig'd in conſcience to do, and we ſhall draw up together and joyn them cloſe again: Since then they gave a juſt occaſion, yea, and are the true cauſes of this ſeparation, they are the Separatiſts and true Schiſmaticks, not we.

5. As for Hereſie let *Romaniſts* ſay what they pleaſe, it can't with the leaſt appearance of truth be laid to our charge: He is not guilty of that crime, who defends obſtinately any opinion whatſomever, elſe all School-men

and Divines ſtanding ſtifly to their own fancys in Doctrinal points, would be reckon'd Hereticks: Such be thoſe only who deny flatly and with obſtinacy Divine Truths or Articles of Faith, which cannot be impos'd upon *Proteſtants* without injuſtice, ignorance, and calumny.

6. They deny indeed General Councils to be infallible in their deciſions, but their infallibility is no Article of Faith, elſe *Auſtin* was a Heretick; aſſerting, "General Councils "gathered out of "all the Chriſtian World, "are often corrected, the "former by the latter; correction

Tom. 6. l. 2. con. Donat.

rection of a Council undoubtedly ſuppoſeth a precedent error and a Council to be errable, as every one underſtands that knows any thing: On the ſame account he ſpeaks after this manner to *Maximian*, an *Arian* Biſhop.

"Neither ought I to inſtance the Council of *Nice*, nor thou the Council of *Arimene*, to take advantage thereby, for neither I am bound by the authority of this nor thou of that; ſet matter with matter, cauſe with cauſe, reaſon with reaſon, try the matter by the authority of Divine Scriptures. *Aaſt. con. Maxim. l. 3. c. 4.*

7. An Article of Faith muſt either be clearly contain'd in Scripture, or according to the *Romaniſts*, declared expreſly by ſome of their General Councils: But that General Councils are infallible in their Deciſions, is neither contain'd clearly in Scriptures, let them tell us in what Part, Book, Chapter, Verſe, nor is it determin'd in any of the eighteen General Councils, they acknowledge as the rules of their Faith; none can be inſtanc'd, where this hath been decided: Upon what grounds then hold they this as a Divine Truth, which is nothing elſe but a fanciful opinion hindering them to follow *Auſtin*'s advice, to ſet matter

matter with matter, cauſe with cauſe, reaſon with reaſon, to try the matter by the authority of Divine Scriptures.

8. The general Councils are ſo far from pretending to be infallible Judges of controverſial Debates, that in a ſet form of Prayer appointed to be ſaid after every Council, they pray that God would ſpare their ignorance, and pardon their errors: and if they curſe and anathematize ſuch as reject their deciſions, this argues not they arrogate to themſelves any infallibility in deciding, for the ſame is the practice of Provincial and Particular Councils, who

De ordin. Cele. con.

neither pretend to be, nor are look'd upon by the *Romaniſts* as infallible Judges.

9. This undeniable truth is of greater moment than perhaps it appears to be of at firſt: For if the General Councils be not infallible when they decide in matters of Faith, none of their deciſions can be holden by *Romaniſts* as divine and reveal'd truths, unleſs they be evidently conformable to God's written Word: Wherefore receive they not the definitions of a private man as reveal'd Oracles? the reaſon is, becauſe they know he is fallible and lyable to error: Now the ſame being the condition and fate of General Councils,

they

they muſt of neceſſity confeſs, they impoſe no obligation upon us to believe their deciſions as Articles of Divine Faith: Who then rejects as *Proteſtants* do Tranſubſtantiation, Invocation of Saints, Image-worſhip, Power of *Popes* to depoſe Princes, Prayer for the dead, and all other points we yield not to the *Romaniſts*, deny's only what is aſſerted by errable Councils, and conſequently no Articles of Divine Faith, we are therefore notoriouſly calumniated, when on this account we are called by *Papiſts* obſtinate in error and Hereticks.

10. But how ſayes the *Romaniſt*? ſhall we reſolve our

doubts in matters of Faith, if we acknowledge not the definitions of General Councils as divine and infallible Oracles? You was told before by S. *Auſtin* how to behave in this caſe: I repeat his words, ſet matter with matter, ſayes he, cauſe with cauſe, reaſon with reaſon, try the matter by the authority of Divine Scriptures, never yet corrupted in material points, nor ever ſhall by Gods eſpecial and neceſſary Providence over his Church; if then you read his Infallible Word with true humility and a ſincere deſire of your own ſpiritual profit, he will open your underſtanding, reſolve your ſcruples, give repoſe to your conſci-

conſcience, and as great inſight in his Word as he knows to be convenient for your ſpiritual intereſt.

11. This method is better and ſecurer than that of the *Romaniſts*; what-ever is decided by a lawful general Council, is to them an Article of Faith, a reveal'd truth, a divine Oracle, but ſuch Councils they hold none to be, unleſs the Members thereof have been really baptiz'd, which they can never be certain of, becauſe this depends on the uncertain intentions of thoſe who Baptiz'd them: For they generally teach beſides the pronunciation of the words, *I Baptize thee in the Name of the Father*, &c. The

Miniſters intention to confer the Sacrament, is abſolutely neceſſary, ſo if it be wanting, as eaſily it may, the Child is not Baptiz'd. On the ſame account they are not certain if their Popes be Prieſts, becauſe perhaps the Biſhop who ordain'd them, had no ſuch intention when he pronounced the ſet form of ordination: Of this I ſhall ſay a word again in another place.

12. But if the general Councils be not infallible, what mean the Scriptures, by aſſerting, The Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt the Church, the Church is the pillar and ground of truth? To this I anſwer, There is nothing here as is evident relating

lating to that ptetended infallible deciſive faculty of General Councils: The firſt Propoſition ſignifieth only the true Church ſhall have an exiſtency and being to the end of the World, maugre the oppoſition of Tyrants, Perſecutors, and all her Enemies, though it may fall out ſhe be not always viſible in any Aſſembly or Congregation: As it happen'd to the Primitive Church at *Jeruſalem*, when all her Members were ſcattered abroad throughout the Regions of *Judæa* and *Samaria*;
as it happen'd when *Acts* 8. 1.
Chriſt was ſmitten,
and all the reſt were hid, as it happen'd in *Elias* his time,
who

who thought he was left alone, not knowing where th' other ſeaven thouſand true Worſhippers of God were; as it happen'd during the Perſecution of the *Roman* Emperors, and lately before the General Reformation of the Chriſtian World, yet the Gates of Hell prevail'd not againſt the Church becauſe ſhe was ever exiſtent, though not viſible as now to the World: Her Meetings and Aſſemblys being of neceſſity in that juncture of affairs very ſecret and unknown to her Enemies. She is ſaid to be the pillar and ground of truth, by reaſon of Gods eſpecial Providence over her Children, never ſuffering them

them all to fail and err, but ſtill ſtirring up ſome or ſeveral in oppoſition to Superſtition, Idolatry and Errors.

ARTIC.

ARTICLE II.

PRINCIPLE II.

That Proteſtants may be ſaved more eaſily, and with greater ſecurity, than Romaniſts.

I Hope the foregoing Diſcourſe will be an occaſion of moderation to the moſt ſevere *Romaniſts*, who reflecting impartially on their former miſtakes, raſh Judgments, and preoccupated opinions, will convert their former zeal, or rather fury againſt

againſt *Proteſtants*, into Brotherly Love and Charity. I ſay more, if they will be at the pains to conſider a moment or two, and ſerioufly, the Contents of this ſecond Article; they ſhall, I doubt not, let go the uncertain, take what is ſureſt, and embrace *Proteſtancy*, as the eaſieſt and ſafeſt way to our Eternal Happineſs, ſince by the grace of God it wants theſe lets and impediments to be met with in the Profeſſion of Popery: To run over ſome of them, with order and method, we ſhall take notice.

1. Of their Faith and Doctrine.

2. Of

2. Of their Divine Worſhip and Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline.

SECT. I.

Their Faith and Doctrine.

1. THeir Faith is ſo blind, that I have heard many of them ſay, if a General Council had defin'd white to be black, they would believe it, whereby you ſee they are diſpoſed to admit of any error, if it be authoriz'd by a General Council, though the infallibility thereof be no point of their Faith, as I have proved evi-

evidently in the foregoing Article.

2. They believe Baptiſm abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, and none a true and real one, if the Miniſter when he pronounceth the words intends not to Baptize, which no doubt happens frequently, ſince his intention may be eaſily diverted to his other deſigns and affairs: Let all the World judge if people thus principled can enjoy a true repoſe of mind or peace of Conſcience, the only foretaſt we have in this life, of that to come: For how can they know aſſuredly, whether the Miniſter or Prieſt really intended to Baptize them or not, and ſo they may doubt

if

if they be Chriſtians? for ſuch they grant none is to be accounted without true Baptiſm; and of this they can have no certainty, becauſe they are ſtill uncertain of the Miniſters intention, judg'd by them ſo neceſſary to the validity of this Sacrament, that if he intended only the meer pronounciation of the words, I Baptize thee in the name of the Father, &c. The Baptiſm could be no more a true one than a bare, frivolous, and inſignificant Ceremony; what trouble then and turmoil of Spirit they muſt needs perpetually wreſtle with, while *Proteſtants* as to this point enjoy a perfect Tranquility, holding

Bap-

Baptiſm independent on the Miniſters good or ill will, malice or intention, provided he pronounce ſeriouſly the words, and ſet form of Baptiſm, which we cannot be but ſure of.

3. I was once eye-witneſs to the cruel torture of Conſcience, a *Romaniſt* ſuffered upon a doubt of his Baptiſm, occaſion'd by this *Romiſh* Doctrine: We were in the ſame Ship together upon Sea, preſs'd by a furious Storm to think on what was our only concern in that conjuncture: In the mean time this Gentleman ſhowing by his melancholy looks the inward diſtemper of his Soul; cryes aloud, as if he had been beſide

ſide himſelf, *he fear'd to be damn'd*: I queſtion'd him on what grounds he ſpoke ſo raſhly; becauſe, ſaid he, I know not whether I be Baptiz'd or not; I doubt if the Prieſt had any ſuch intention when he pronounc'd the words commonly uſed in Baptiſm; I told him whatever I thought fitteſt to convince his underſtanding and quiet his Conſcience, but could not prevail, becauſe he knew the Council of *Trent* teacheth the Miniſters intention to be abſolutely neceſſary to the exiſtency of Baptiſm.

4. On the ſame grounds they may doubt if their Prieſts can abſolve, and be truly Prieſts,

Prieſts, becauſe in their perſwaſion they are no Prieſts without the intention of the Biſhop that ordain'd them, which perhaps he had not when he utter'd the ſet form of Ordination. This minds me of a Biſhop lately deceas'd in *France*, who confeſs'd at his laſt hour he had ordain'd many, but ever without intention to ordain any: I was intimately acquainted with one ordain'd by the ſame Prelate, and I am fully perſwaded if he were advertis'd of this laſt confeſſion of his, he would ſcruple to continue a moment in the function of Prieſthood.

5. Who

5. Who can reliſh, if he hath any ſentiment of true Piety, what they teach of their Purgatory and purging fires. This Doctrine flatters ſinners in their imperfections, cauſeth them to live more looſely than otherwiſe they would do, to make little ſcruple of theſe ſins they call venial, and never eternally puniſh'd: On this account they are not ſo apprehenſive of theſe Everlaſting Torments we ſhould ever remember of, when we are ſollicited to ſin, if no higher motive can withdraw us from it: Hell I ſay enters not ſo deeply into their thoughts becauſe they rely on this third place: And the worſt of them all after an abſolu-

ſolution got from a Prieſt, hopes to go to Heaven, if not ſtreight, at leaſt a little about by Purgatory: The *Proteſtants* who believe no middle place after death, out of Heaven or Hell, walk more cautiouſly, fear more God's dreadful but juſt Judgments, certain if they dye in the Lord, they ſhall reſt from their labours, if in ſin they ſhall be liable to his wrath for ever.

6. The Scripture is the true Spiritual book we ſhould ſtill have in our hands.

Nocturnâ verſare manu verſare diurnâ.

Here we are to gather that Spiri-

Spiritual *Manna* to nouriſh not our Bodies but our Souls, while we travel through the Wilderneſs of this wild World. Theſe ſacred Writings are capable to make us wiſe unto Salvation; ſearch the Scriptures ſaith S. *John*, for in them ye think ye have Eternal Life: Yet the *Romaniſts* deprive the people of this Spiritual Food, forbiding them ſeverely to read the Holy Scriptures, as if they were more hurtful than profitable; hence 'tis they live in a deep ignorance of all true Chriſtian Duty, in indifferency, and lukewarmneſs, without reliſh of heavenly things, without true devotion, which is never more ſtirred

red up, than when we hear God ſpeaking in the ſecret of our hearts by the Divine Oracles of his Holy Word.

7. They cauſe the People to contemn or at leaſt to have leſs veneration for Divine Scriptures, by teaching they contain not all things neceſſary to Salvation, they are obſcure, they are imperfect. They ſeem ſometimes to queſtion their Divine Original, when they ask how we are ſure they are inſpir'd by the Holy Ghoſt; as if that were not known to ſay no more by the Air, Majeſty, and Simplicity of expreſſion, proper to God only, as we know the Kings Letters and Commands to his Subjects by

Spiritual *Manna* to nouriſh not our Bodies but our Souls, while we travel through the Wilderneſs of this wild World. Theſe ſacred Writings are capable to make us wiſe unto Salvation; ſearch the Scriptures ſaith S. *John*, for in them ye think ye have Eternal Life: Yet the *Romaniſts* deprive the people of this Spiritual Food, forbiding them ſeverely to read the Holy Scriptures, as if they were more hurtful than profitable; hence 'tis they live in a deep ignorance of all true Chriſtian Duty, in indifferency, and lukewarmneſs, without reliſh of heavenly things, without true devòtion, which is never more ſtirred

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his Seal and proper expreſſions, none but the King uttering himſelf after that manner: So the Holy Scriptures being as God's Patents and Letters to us, we need not enquire from whom they are, let us only diſcloſe them, and we ſhall inſtantly know their Divine Original, *quaſi dei ſigillo*, as by God's own Seal and Characters proper to him only, without having recourſe to the pretended infallible deciſions of General Councils, as *Romaniſts* do, who muſt run back to the Scriptures again to prove theſe deciſions infallible, and ſo, *in circuitu ambulant*, they turn round in a circle without advancing one ſtep. But 'tis not

not ſo much my deſign to diſpute and quarrel with the *Romaniſts*, as to go on peaceably and in the Spirit of Chriſtian Charity, pointing out as with the finger, the great Obſtacles to perfection they meet with, by following blindly the Maxims of Popery: I add only here their Prayers in an unknown Tongue unfruitful as S. *Paul* ſaith, to the underſtanding, is not a ſmall let to Piety and Devotion; what Spiritual Conſolation can the ignorant ſort reap at Maſs, or as they call it, Divine Service, by hearing the Prieſt praying they know not what? unleſs they hold againſt common ſence and reaſon, that ignorance

rance is the Mother of Piety and Devotion.

8. Their Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, is on ſeveral accounts dangerous and enſnaring.

Firſt, It deſtroys all evidence grounded on the experimental knowledge of our ſenſes, and makes void the proof Chriſt made uſe of to his Apoſtles, in aim to convince them he was not a Spirit; *Handle me*, ſayes he, *and ſee, for a ſpirit hath not Fleſh and Bones as ye ſee me have*, which can be no conviction to *Romaniſts*, who both taſt, handle, and ſee bread in the *Euchariſt*; if they will truſt their own ſenſes as our Saviour in

Luk. 24.32.

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a not unlike caſe deſir'd his Diſciples to truſt to theirs, yet deny flatly what they ſee, taſt, and handle, to be Bread, againſt their own and the experience of all men not blind of both eyes: Our Saviour's Proof, I ſay, that he was not a Spirit, ſhall never influence a *Papiſt* to Conviction, for though the Apoſtles could both ſee and handle our Saviour's Body, nevertheleſs 'tis no neceſſary inference by their Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, that Chriſt's Body was there; may they not ſay the Apoſtles could touch, handle, and ſee the appearance only thereof, as they handle, and ſee the accidents of Bread, and not really

Bread in the *Euchariſt* in their opinion of this Sacrament, which taketh quite away the force of Chriſt's argument grounded on the meer Teſtimony of our ſenſes and favours, the *Marcioniſts* denying he had ever a true and real body?

I ſhall ſay yet ſomething more ſurprizing, but no leſs true than what I have ſaid before. This Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation. 1. Eſtabliſheth that old and odd fancy of ſome doting Philoſophers, who doubted of all things how evident ſoever. 2. 'Tis evidently deſtructive to the whole body of Chriſtian Religion: In order to prove *apodictically* theſe two Propoſi-

poſitions, I muſt ſuppoſe a Third one, as a ſelf-evident Principle, and whence they both flow as from their only ſource, *That our Senſes in the* Euchariſt, *are deceiv'd in and about their proper object*; which I think can be denyed by no *Romaniſts*, ſince they confeſs, though they ſee all the appearances of true Bread, that nevertheleſs there is no ſuch ſubſtance in the *Euchariſt*, but the Body and Blood of Chriſt, under the veils of Bread and Wine: I ſee nothing, I taſt nothing, I touch nothing in a Conſecrated Wafer, but what my ſenſes are ſenſible of in an unconſecrated one, but ſaith the *Romaniſt*, I muſt not ſtand

ſtand in this caſe to the judgment of my ſenſes, what I ſee, touch, and taſt, after the Conſecration, is no more in reality Bread, what-ever the conſtant and experimental knowledge of our Senſes teach us to the contrary; they will grant then I hope they are deceiv'd, and miſtake their own proper object; but perhaps becauſe they foreſee the dangerous conſequence of ſuch a Conceſſion, ſome will be apt to run to a School-diſtinction, in aim to defend with a ſhow of reaſon this ſelf-evident falſhood, that our Senſes in the caſe here handled are not deceived as to their proper Object: They may diſtinguiſh, I fancy,

ſancy, two ſort of Objects, a Mediate one, and another Immediate, the Immediate one is, the colour, ſhape, quantity, and other accidents or appearances of Bread, the Mediate one is the ſubſtance it ſelf; our Senſes, ſay they, miſtake not the former, becauſe the accidents are the ſame both before and after the Conſecration, but ſure I am, they miſtake the latter, it being now by their Principles inviſibly changed into the Body of Chriſt: This diſtinction then cannot ſerve their turn. Let them torture their diſcurſive faculty never ſo much, they ſhall never be able to prove that our Senſes are not truly deceiv'd, re-

preſenting to us as Bread, what really, if we believe the *Romaniſts*, is not Bread. I come now to the Concluſions ſpringing naturally from this granted Principle: If I mind to play the *Pyrrhonian*, and doubt of every thing I have from the *Romiſh* Tranſubſtantiation, a ground whereon to build this extravagancy; whither-ſoever I direct my ſight, I can aſcertain you of nothing that my eye ſees: I enter into a Garden, and there I behold here Lillies, and there Roſes, I ſmell them, I touch them, and yet I may queſtion the truth of this, and doubt if I ſee any ſuch thing, what if the red of the Roſes and the white of

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the Lillies be now by an Eucharistick-like Miracle the covertures of some other substances that are neither Roses nor Lillies; so perhaps 'tis not a Rose that I smell, a Lilly that I see, Fire that I feel, an Apple that I tast, a Trumpet that I hear, but some other substances in their shape, and cloath'd with their Garments: As 'tis not Bread that I see in the *Eucharist*, but another substance, to wit Christ's Body and Blood under the accidental parts of Bread and Wine; what do we know but the whole visible Mass of this World, and all the Objects of our Senses are nothing else but meer accidents and Superficial Re-

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preſentations of things that perhaps were and now have no foundation in being, or never were, but have ever been ſupplied by God's infinite power? Thus the *Pyrrhonian* Triumphs upon the ſame ground whereon the *Romaniſt* ſettles that ſtrange Doctrine of Tranſubſtantiation, while the whole Body of Chriſtian Religion is as it were a flote and carried too and fro by the wind of this uncertain Doctrine. For if our Senſes may miſtake their own proper object, as confeſſedly the *Romaniſt* ſayes they do in the *Euchariſt*, our Faith is nothing elſe but fancy and uncertainty: Comes it not by hearing? *Fides exauditu?*

ditu? if than one ſence may be deceiv'd, why may not likewiſe the other? What I ſee in the *Euchariſt* is not Bread; though it appears to be ſuch, perhaps what I hear is not the true Word of God, though it ſhine with all the Characters thereof: In fine, ſince our Senſes are capable of an errour relating to their proper object, an eye-witneſs now can be no witneſs at all, or at leaſt no Conviction: To what purpoſe then did our Saviour ſhow himſelf after his Reſurrection ſo often, and to ſo many in the day of his glorious Aſcenſion? In *promptu cauſa eſt*, the Anſwer is at hand, to no purpoſe, if our Senſes could miſtake

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their proper object, and what ſo many eye-witneſſes ſaw and judg'd to be Chriſt, could have been his meer ſhape and figure, as the *Marcioniſt* pretends, with a clear advantage over and from the *Romaniſts* whoſe Doctrine he may eaſily make uſe of in defence of his error and Hereſie. To conclude, if what appears to the eyes of all men to be Bread, is no ſuch thing, what has been ſounded in the ears of all the World, from Father to Son as a truth may prove a falſhood? Our ears being no leſs apt to be impos'd upon than our eyes. Which looks like a mortal blow to all tradition of equal authority with Divine Scriptures,

tures, and I diſcover not yet how the *Romaniſt* can ſhun it: For ſince he grants we may all, and have been from the Cradle of the Church, miſtaken in what we ſee, may not we likewiſe be deceiv'd in what we have heard from our Fathers, and they in what they have heard from their Fore-runners, *&c.* And the rather that an ear-witneſs is not ſo much to be credited as he that has ſeen: You judge by this diſcourſe, what extreams theſe are forc'd into, who deny on ſo ſlight grounds the greateſt and moſt ſenſible evidence, which is that of our ſenſes: But Chriſt's Word, ſayes the *Romaniſt*, is my ſecurity; he aſ-

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ſures us the Bread is chang'd into his body, I enquire no more: Who ſpeaks ſo forgets, or knows not what is ſaid elſewhere, *litera occidit*, the letter killeth, and the literal Senſe is an occaſion to ſeveral of groſs errors and pitiful miſtakes: Chriſt is called a Door, a Rock, a Wine Tree, a Lyon, *&c.* We would be look'd upon as beſides our ſelves if we aſſented to all this, as interpreted in the literal ſence, and according to the bare ſound of the words: For as the literal ſence of ſuch and the like expreſſions, involves not only obvious implicancys and manifeſt abſurdities, but moreover was conſtantly contradicted

dicted by the experimental knowledge of ſuch as were ſo happy as to ſee Chriſt, even ſo in our caſe, theſe words, *this is my Body*, if underſtood conformably to the mute Letter, both repreſent to our mind a World of illegal, abſur'd, and irrational inferences, and are beſides contradicted through all Ages by the conſtant experience of all ſeeing and feeling men: Let no Man nevertheleſs imagine we ground our myſteries on the Teſtimony of our Senſes; we only ſay nothing can be ſuppos'd as a myſtery that is point blank againſt the evidence of ſence and infallible experience, which cannot be retort-

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ed againſt the myſtery of the Trinity, for though we neither ſee it nor feel it, yet our Senſes ſhew nothing to us evidently deſtructive to it, and on this account this myſtery is not againſt but above the reach both of Senſe and Reaſon.

Secondly, This Doctrine inclineth the meaner capacities to idolatry, and the ſharper wits to Hypocriſie and Diſſimulation: The common People, becauſe incapable to diſtinguiſh the appearance of Bread they ſee, from the Body of Chriſt they ſee not, and being taught to adore him hidden thus under the veils of Bread and Wine, are apt to, and no doubt do

do frequently adore the accidents they ſee, which they call ſometimes blaſphemouſly, God, yea ſay commonly, when the Wafer is lifted up by the Prieſt in the midſt of the Maſs, *on leve Dieu*, God is lifted, their underſtanding finding no paſſage through the Conſecrated Wafer to Chriſt's Body.

9. As for the ſharper ſort of *Romaniſts* when they reflect;

1. On what is ſaid in Scripture, that the Heavens muſt receive Chriſt until the times of reſtitution of all things. *Act.* 3. 22.

2. That

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2. That a Body can no more be without its due extenſion, for example, of five or ſix foot, than water without humidity, fire without heat, a ſtone without hardneſs.

3. That the Bread cannot be miraculouſly chang'd into Chriſt's Body, becauſe all miracles are of neceſſity viſible, as is clear by all thoſe we ever heard or read of: But here the ſubſtance into which the Bread is converted, is not viſible: This viſibility nevertheleſs is neceſſary in a change really miraculous, as it appears by that of water into wine, of *Moſes* Rod into a Serpent, *&c.*

4. That

4. That 'tis inconſiſtent with reaſon to ſay Chriſt's Body is at the ſame time in Heaven and Earth, yea, and in as many places as there be all the World over Conſecrated Wafers: Who-ever underſtands theſe abſurdities, will never, I am confident, believe a true Tranſubſtantiation, though he profeſs otherwiſe outwardly through Hypocriſie and Diſſimulation: The Trinity, I confeſs, and Hypoſtatical Union, or the Incarnation, are far beyond the reach of our reaſon, yet becauſe they are not the Objects of our Senſes, we believe them with leſs reluctancy, and more eaſily upon authority; but that which hath ever

ever been, and ſtill is evidently repugnant to the experimental knowledge of all our Senſes, as the Tranſubſtantiation confeſſedly is, can ſcarce ever be looked upon as a truth, by ſuch as make uſe of their diſcerning faculty: The *Romaniſts* inſtance commonly theſe Words of Chriſt, *This is my Body*, as the ground of this Doctrine, which they ſay, muſt not be taken in a figurative ſence, becauſe they are Chriſt's laſt Will and Teſtament; and no man, neither ignorant nor malicious expreſſeth his laſt Will by Figures and Metaphors: But here lies their miſtake, that theſe words, *This is my Body*, are a true

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and real Teſtament, or *Chriſt*'s Legacy to his Apoſtles: For he ſays not, I leave you my Body, which is the uſual manner of uttering our ſelves in Teſtaments, but, *This is my Body*. 'Tis no Teſtament, than as they imagine, or at leaſt not a proper one.

10. Their Doctrine relating to the mediation of the Virgin *Mary* and other Saints, withdraws them from rendering to Chriſt our only Redeemer due Honour and Glory: For though there is no other Name under Heaven whereby we muſt be ſaved but that of Chriſt, yet many of them pretend to Eternal Happineſs by the merits of the Saints and the Virgin

gin *Mary*, whom they joyn ſtill with *Jeſus* in their Viſits to the Sick, either crying aloud to them, or exhorting the ſick to pronounce *Jeſus Maria*, as if they judg'd Chriſt's merits inſufficient, or that ſome other Name, than that of Chriſt our Advocate, with the Father, could be a propitiation for our Sins; hence 'tis they extol ſo much their meritorious works, that we have reaſon to ſay, they ground thereon their beſt hopes of the other Life; at leaſt 'tis certain, the ſimple undiſcerning ſort relys more on what they do than on what Chriſt did for them, I mean more upon their good works than on his infinite merits and mercys.

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SECT. II.

Their Divine Worſhip and Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline.

1. THeir manner of Divine Worſhip is not unlike that of the ancient Heathens, and on this account is far from the purity of the Primitive Church: They adore God in Pictures and Images, as he was adored by the Heathens in the Sun, Moon, and other leſs noble Creatures, or rather to ſpeak in their own terms, they worſhip thoſe Images as repreſentations of that inviſi-

ble and Soveraign Being, we call God: Though this was ſeverely puniſhed in the *Iſraelites* worſhipping the Golden Calf as a repreſentation of God, for I cannot imagine they ador'd it as a true God, unleſs you ſuppoſe they were as void of reaſon as it was; if then this Worſhip of theirs be looked upon by all as Idolatry, what may we judge of that *Romiſh* Image Worſhip the very ſame, or at leaſt in nothing material differing from it?

2. Images are commonly called the Books of Ignorants, but in my judgment they deſerve rather to be denominated the Books of Ignorance, becauſe they occaſion

ſion often miſtakes and errors: As for inſtance, an Old Man repreſenting God the Father, a Dove the Holy Ghoſt, are apt to make the ignorant ſort believe they have indeed ſome ſuch ſhape. I ſhall not conteſt here about this point, becauſe it hath been diſcuſs'd ſo often by others: One thing only I ſhall ſay, which I think is undeniable, that *Proteſtants* ſerve God more in ſpirit and truth than *Romaniſts* do: Becauſe they make their Addreſſes to him immediately, without having recourſe to Images, or imploring the help of Saints as Mediators: I know they anſwer this by diſtinguiſhing a relative and Soveraign

Worſhip. The former they allow to Images, the latter to God only: But

Firſt, This relative Worſhip was condemn'd and puniſh'd in the *Iſraelites*, as I have inſinuated above.

And Secondly, They adore confeſſedly the Croſs, *cultu latriæ*, with that Soveraign *cult* belonging to God only: What then can they inſtance in defence of their innocency? I muſt as yet tell them in this place;

3. They fall ſhort of the end they aim at, in covering the inſide of their Churches with rare Pictures, and Images of exquiſite Artifice; their aim is, as I charitably ſuppoſe, to ſtir up the people thereby

thereby to greater devotion. But we find by experience a quite contrary effect; they are diverted from Prayer, by that great variety of alluring objects they have before their eyes, you may ſee them in their Churches more gazing, for the moſt part, than praying: At leaſt, certain it is, the common ſort is withdrawn by ſuch outward ſhows, from uniting their hearts to God by fervent Prayer: The uſe of Images then, is not ſo great a help to Devotion, as the *Romaniſts* do falſly imagine.

4. Nevertheleſs their Image-worſhip, though to be rejected, is not ſo intollerable as their adoration of the

Conſecrated Wafer; becauſe beſides what I have ſaid before, it may happen, and I am of opinion very frequently, that their Prieſts either want the neceſſary intention, or intirely forget, or deſignedly will not Conſecrate the Wafer: In this caſe meer unconſecrated Bread is ador'd, and expos'd on their Altars to the publick *Cult:* Will they ſay this is no inconveniency, though the People may be guiltleſs becauſe of their invincible ignorance, and ſtrong imagination of *Chriſt's* Body really there exiſtent. The thought of this accident, which no doubt happens frequently, with-draweth ſeveral *Romaniſts* from yielding to

to the Wafer, that Soveraign *Cult*, due to God only.

5. There is another inconveniency, not unlike the precedent, in a ſort of Worſhip ordinary amongſt *Romaniſts*: They honour the Relicks of Saints, as their Bones, Garments, and Parcels of their Bodies, they expoſe them to the publick *Cult* on their Altars, they carry them with a ceremonious pomp in their ſolemn Proceſſions: But what if theſe Relicks be of Men that are not in Heaven? For I ſuppoſe 'tis no Article of their Faith, that whom the Pope Canonizeth, as they ſpeak, is not a Reprobate; ſince his infallibility was never yet declar-

ed by any of their eighteen General Councils, he is not infallible, when he declares this man to be in Heaven, or that Woman to be a Saint: Perhaps then you invocate a damn'd Soul, you kneel before the Bones of a Reprobate, you ask help from thoſe whom God has rejected; than which I can imagine nothing more abſur'd: If this were well reflected on by the *Romaniſts*, they would not be ſo forward in worſhipping the remainder of the dead.

6. 'Tis now full time, leſt I exceed the bonds I have ſet to my ſelf, to ſpeak one word of their Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline: When I conſider beſides,

ſides, the Written Law of God, how many and how heavy Obligations the *Romiſh* Church impoſeth upon her Subjects, I am fully convinced that Popery is juſtly called, and without exaggeration, a meer ſlavery; the Crown'd heads are lyable to it, no leſs, yea rather more than others: Moſt of *Romaniſt* Divines teach without any warrant, either from Scripture or reaſon; the Popes of *Rome* have power to depoſe Princes, untye their Subjects from their ſworn allegiance, to give their Dominions, *primo occupanti*, to ſuch as can conquer them if they refuſe to purge their Kingdoms of opinions judged

by *Romaniſts* Heretical. This you may ſee at large in the Council of *Lateran*, held under *Innocent* the third, third Chapter.

7. The *Romiſh* Church enſlaves ſo far the underſtanding of her Followers, as to forbid them the uſe of that rational faculty God has beſtowed upon us, chiefly to find out by its light the true Church, and having found it to govern our ſelves therein by the ſame, to ſearch the Scriptures, to try the Spirits if they be of God or not, leſt we be carried away by the wind of all ſort of Doctrine. But this is not permitted to the *Romaniſts*, they muſt pull out their eyes and ſay, white

white is black, if a General Council, though never as yet proved by them infallible, affirm it: This occaſion'd an ancient Philoſopher to call the Chriſtian Religion, the Religion of Fools, not becauſe they believe things above the reach of Humane Reaſon; for that is no folly, but on this account, that ſome of them, to wit the *Romaniſts*, believe as 'twas inſtanc'd in the *Euchariſt*, or Lord's Supper, that which is contradicted by the experimental knowledge of all our Senſes.

8. 'Twas a Liberty and Priviledge of the Primitive Church, as S. *Paul* witneſſeth to the *Corinthians*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 24, 25, 27.

Corinthians, that whatſoever is ſold in the Shambles, whatever is ſet before us we may eat, asking no queſtion for Conſcience-ſake, that every Creature of God is good, and nothing to be refuſed, if it be received with Thankſgiving; the *Roman* Church has taken away this Priviledge, and commands abſtinence from Meats, ordains Faſts obſerved moſt punctually by ſome of them, falſely perſwaded the beſt part of Chriſtian perfection conſiſts in ſuch indiſcreet Rigors, not knowing that true vertue conſiſts mainly in an intire Victory, we ſhould endeavour to get over our own Paſſions, our moſt dangerous, becauſe Domeſtick

meſtick Enemys: So many commanded Faſts as we ſee in the *Romiſh* Church, under the pain of Mortal Sin, are no doubt, an occaſion of ſin and diſobedience to many, who think themſelves obliged in Conſcience to obſerve them as injunctions of their Church: Cardinal *Bellarmine* that Renown'd *Romaniſt*, was of this opinion: 'Tis reported, he was wont to ſay, that if 'ere he happen'd to be Pope, he would aboliſh the Obligation of the Lent Faſt. No doubt becauſe he judg'd it a too heavy Yoke, and on this account more hurtful than profitable.

9. Marriage

9. Marriage in the pureſt age of the Church, was not forbidden to *Eccleſiaſticks*; ſaith not S. *Paul*,

1 *Timot.* 3. that a Biſhop may be the Huſband of

Hebr. 13. 4. one Wife. That Marriage is honourable in all, and the Bed undefil'd: And

1 *Timot.* 4. 3. 6. writing to *Timothy*, that forbidding to Marry, and commanding to abſtain from Meats, is the Doctrine of the Devils: Was not the Forerunner of Chriſt, the Son of the High-Prieſt *Zacharias*, an evident mark, that our Saviour approv'd of, and honoured ſuch ſort of Marriages? yet the *Romiſh* Church adding

ding ſtill great and heavy weights to the yoke of Chriſt, forbids expreſly *Eccleſiaſticks* to Marry, though S. *Paul* ſaith, let every man, that is, whether Clergy or Layman, unleſs he hath the Gift of Continency, have his own Wife; which Gift is always ſuppos'd when a Man or a Woman vows Chaſtity: So if you find by experience, you have it not, you are obliged not to vow, or if you have vowed raſhly, flattering your ſelf, you had this Gift, you are no more engag'd by your former vow, becauſe none is obliged to perform beyond what lies in his power, and 'tis in no man's power

1 *Corinth.* 7. 2.

power to live continently, without a Gift of Continency, which God beſtoweth on whom he pleaſes, and refuſeth it to others as he thinks fit; who may, and perhaps are obliged in this caſe, to ſecure themſelves from Sin and Temptation, by a lawful Marriage: For in this conjuncture, *Melius eſt nubere quam uri*, 'tis better to Marry than burn.

10. 'Tis obſervable, the moſt of thoſe that enter theſe Orders, they call commonly Religious, make their vows ſo young and ſo inconſiderately, that they hardly ever reflect on what they undertake, ſeveral of them proteſt they are forced thereunto by their

their Parents, or upon the account of ſome other humane reſpects and intereſt, and if afterwards they renew twice a year, as 'tis cuſtomary amongſt the Jeſuits, their firſt vows, 'tis but with their Lips and not from their Heart: They may ſin, I confeſs, by this diſſimulation, though I am perſwaded, their Crime is none of the greateſt, becauſe of the juncture and neceſſity of their affairs; but however this Sin communicates no validity to their vow, which ſubſiſts not in reality, without an intire liberty, freedom, and inward conſent, becauſe of the heavy and inſupportable Yoke it lays on their Necks; which

in

in this caſe they may ſhake off at the firſt opportunity, and follow that ſort of Life they ſhall find moſt convenient for their Spiritual concerns and good of their Souls.

11. I wonder'd often upon what grounds the *Romaniſts* call theſe three vows of Chaſtity, Poverty, and Obedience to their Superiors, Evangelical Counſels, becauſe I had never read in the Goſpel, that Chriſt exhorted ever any to tye themſelves to his ſervice by ſolemn vows. He counſelled, I confeſs, a young man to ſell all he had, and give it to the Poor, but not to make a vow to do ſo: Neither could I ever be perſwaded,

ſwaded, nor any rational man ever will, that 'tis a higher degree of perfection to vow, for inſtance, Chaſtity, than to live in Continency, without ſuch a tye and obligation.

12. This is nevertheleſs the Doctrine of the moſt learned *Romaniſts*. And if I remember well of their chief Divine *Thomas Aquinas*, but as they commonly ſay in *Sorbon*, *Amicus Ariſtoteles*, *amicus Divus Thomas*, *ſed magis amica veritas*, no man's authority is to be admitted of againſt the truth, which undoubtedly ſides not with them in this conjuncture; becauſe their aſſertion is intirely grounded on this weak and illu-

illuſory reaſon, that he who vows Continency, ſacrificeth to God the thing men make moſt account of, that precious liberty, they think preferable to all the Riches of the World, which he that lives chaſt without ſuch a tye does not.

13. This I ſay is a meer falſhood and a flat illuſion, for though I vow, I keep intirely my former liberty. True 'tis *I* can't break this promiſe and vow made to God if it be a real one, without committing a ſin, but this puts me in a worſe condition than *I* was in before: For now if *I* fall, *I* commit two Sins, one againſt my Vow, and another againſt the vertue

tue of Continency, whereas before I vowed I could be guilty but of one. I think then the ſtate of higheſt perfection is that which removeth us fartheſt from ſin and the occaſions thereof, which certainly vows do not, but enſnaring men rather becauſe of their great weakneſs and frailty, expoſe them to both by that perverſe, though inbred inclination of theirs, to whatever is forbidden them; for nothing more true than *nitimur in vetitum ſemper*, *&c.*

14. This engageth me here to the defence of an Aſſertion, which will be looked upon as a Paradox by the Romaniſts, yet if reflected on

on without preoccupation, is a clear, ſimple, and undeny-able truth : They dry up all the veins of their Eloquence in extolling a Religious Life, as they call it : they ſay it is moſt perfect, happy, bleſſed, and what not : read *Jerome Platus* on this Subject, and you ſhall find him as whimſical in his notions of this imaginary happineſs, as *Plato* was in his abſtract Idea's.

15. I can prove to perſwaſion there is no way of ſerving God more dangerous, and wherein you ſhall meet with greater obſtacles to your ſpiritual progreſs and eternal happineſs, than in theſe pretended Religious Orders, as they now ſtand of the

the Romiſh Church; my reaſon is clear, and runs thus, becauſe their yoak is incomparably greater and heavier than that of other Chriſtians, ſince beſides the Commands of God and their Church, they tye themſelves to a numberleſs number of petty obſervances and rules, which though they confeſs bind not their conſcience, yet they teach none of them can ſcarce ever be tranſgreſſ'd without ſin, either *ratione ſcandali*, by reaſon of the ſcandal, or *ratione contemptus*, becauſe of the contempt of Authority, or on ſome other account; they ſay as yet ſomething more ſtrange, that *non progredi, regredi eſt*, 'tis not enough for them to obſerve

obſerve the Commands of God and the Church, they call that *non progredi*, no progreſs, unleſs they do more than he has commanded, by ſtanding with as great preciſeneſs to their Cuſtoms and Rules, as if they were an eſſential part of Gods written Law.

15. In what fears then, if they have a timorous conſcience; in what troubles and turmoils, and what vexation of ſpirit they live in : for if ſo few keep Gods Commands, as 'tis ſaid the Juſt falls ſeven times a day, what judgment may we frame of them who pretend to do more than he has ordain'd, by obſerving a number innumerable of petty Rules,

Rules, Statutes, and frivolous Cuſtoms. On this account I have heard ſeveral amongſt them ſay what I believe to be moſt true, that their yoke was not like to the yoke of Chriſt, ſweet and light, *Jugum ſuave & onus leve*, but rather exceedingly bitter, and moſt heavy, *Jugum amarum & onus grave.*

16. In fine, I may affirm, without deviating from the Truth, That theſe *Romiſh* Vows are rather Snares to intrap Souls, than true means to their attaining to a higher degree of Glory in Heaven. The Devil overcomes ſome by manifeſt Temptations, and a flat Propoſition of Sin, but becauſe ſome others, deſirous

to live after a more perfect manner, admit not ſo eaſily of his Suggeſtions, he catcheth them by their own inclinations, by vowed engagements, to the purſuance of a Perfection, which, through Humane Frailty, they ſhall never reach to; ſo weary to ſwim always againſt the water, they are forc'd, at length, to yield to the ſtream, and go downwards, which was the Enemies ſole aim and main deſign.

17. Out of this foregoing Diſcourſe, we may conclude, Proteſtants to be moſt happy, as meeting with none of theſe forementioned Obſtacles, to their eternal happineſs, ſo long as they follow the

Maxims

Maxims of true Proteſtancy. For,

Firſt, Their Faith is not ſo blind, though ſubmiſſive enough to Church Authority, as to hold for Divine Truths, the fanciful Opinions of fallible Men, or Deciſions of errable Councils: The Word of God onely is their Rule, to this they are taught to conform their Faith and their Actions.

Secondly, They are not tortur'd and turmoil'd with Doubts, if they be Baptiz'd or not, becauſe they know the Exiſtency of Baptiſm to be independant on the Miniſters uncertain intentions.

Thirdly, They have no Incitement to Sin, by relying

on a middle place between Heaven and Hell; they hold no Purgatory, and ſo are powerfully deterr'd from offending God, through fear of his terrible Juſtice exercis'd in Hell, upon ſuch as die without Repentance.

Fourthly, They reject the dangerous diſtinction of Venial, and Mortal Sin, as opening a door to Looſeneſs; for though ſome Sins be more heinous than others, yet in this we muſt confeſs a perfect equality, that they are all offences of an infinite Majeſty, and conſequently deſerve his eternal Wrath, as being of an unlimited malice.

Fifthly, They allow every one to read the Scripture as the

the Fountain of all wholeſom Doctrine, and capable to make us wiſe unto Salvation, as being a Light to our Underſtanding, leſt we err; and a Fire to our Will, leſt we wax Cold in Charity and Love towards God and our Neighbors.

Sixthly, Their Doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper is ſpirit and life, it gives no occaſion either of Idolatry or Hypocriſie, by teaching that ſtrange Novelty of *Tranſubſtantiation:* They captivate indeed their underſtanding *in obſequium Fidei*, in obedience to Divine Faith, but pull not out their Eyes to believe there is no Bread in the Euchariſt, where they

ſee all the inſeparable Properties thereof, as Colour, Shape, Quantity, &c.

Seventhly, They rely ſolely on the Merits of Chriſt; neither on the mediation of Saints, nor on their own good works, fully perſuaded of this Chriſtian Truth, when they have done all they can, they are but uſeleſs Servants, and that all their ſufficiency is from Above.

Eighthly, Their Divine Worſhip is pure, and without mixture of Superſtition or Idolatry; neither intirely without Ceremonies, nor overburden'd with 'em ſuperſtitiouſly.

Ninthly, They adore God in Spirit and Truth, not under

der corporal Shapes, and falſe Repreſentations; they adore him as Spirit and Truth, as he is in reality, knowing perfectly all their ſpiritual needs, and bodily neceſſities, without the help of Saints as Speakers and Informers.

Tenthly, Their Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline is moſt conformable in all its parts to that of the Primitive Church, as alſo their Faith, their Manners, and way of living, as may be gathered out of this and the foregoing Article; and every one knows that is not altogether a Stranger to Antiquity.

Eleventhly, They ſerve God in all freedom of ſpirit, without endangering their

Souls by vows of Continency, true Snares rather to Innocency, than fit means for attaining to Perfection and eternal Felicity.

ARTIC.

ARTICLE III.

SECT. I.

Concluſions flowing from the firſt Principle of this Method.

I. MY firſt Principle was, *That thoſe who profeſs Proteſtancy, may be ſaved.* I proved it to Conviction, without invectives or bitterneſs, in the ſpirit of Chriſtian

Charity, Meekneſs and Lenity, perſuaded of this clear Truth, that Conviction of the intellective Faculty worketh never a true Converſion, unleſs the Will be conquer'd by a civil and charitable way of debating.

II. 'Tis Proverbial amongſt the *Romaniſts*, That out of the Church there is no hopes of ſalvation. In what ſenſe this is true, 'tis not my deſign here to inquire; but I affirm they are pitifully miſtaken, underſtanding by the Church, that handful of Chriſtians united together in communion with the See of *Rome*, which is as unreaſonable,

nable, as if one would ſay, a Particular is an Univerſal, a Part is the Whole, or at leaſt of as great and vaſt a bulk. They will grant then, I ſuppoſe, *Proteſtants* to be Members of the Univerſal Church, but dead ones, deſtitute of life, ſpirit and vigour. The contradictory of this Propoſition ſtands demonſtrated in the firſt Article; for ſince they may be ſaved by the merits and influence of their inviſible Head Chriſt, they are both wholeſom, living, and vigorous Members of his Church.

III. They cannot be accuſed of Schiſm, nor without a ground-

groundleſs Calumny called *Schiſmaticks*, ſince they are ſtill contain'd in the Catholick or Univerſal Church, their Reform being in the Church, not from it; hold they not all Points neceſſary to ſalvation, and whatever was of Divine Faith in the primitive Times. They ſeparated, I confeſs, from the particular Church of *Rome*, but *Romaniſts* were the true cauſes of this Separation, by introducing Errors and Novelties, ſo they are properly the *Separatiſts*, not *Proteſtants*: Let them be aſhamed then to ſound perpetually as they do in the Peoples ears, ſuch a notorious Calumny, which

which with greater truth may be Retorted againſt themſelves.

IV. I hope hereafter they ſhall prove more moderate, and call them Brethren, whom they have thought hitherto Hereticks; for I am perſuaded they are convinc'd this foul aſperſion of Hereſie is groundleſs, as being a meer illuſion, and the product of a preoccupated judgment. The Proteſtants, ſay they, are Hereticks, becauſe they reject obſtinately the Deciſions of General Councils; but will they never reflect that theſe Deciſions can neither be looked upon by us, nor by them

them as revealed Truths, unleſs their Infallibility be either grounded on clear Scripture, or in their ſentiment on the Authority of ſome General Council. In what Scripture is it ſaid, General Councils are infallible Judges of Controverſial Debates? In what Council was it decided, that General Councils were unerrable? Here they are amaz'd, and their thoughts at a ſtand; they are forced to yield, and confeſs ingenuouſly, that this pretended Infallibility hath no other foundation in being, but that of their own Opinion and Fancy: For though 'twere grounded on the Deciſion of

of ſome General Council, this muſt be firſt proved Infallible by an Evidence diſtinct from its own Teſtimony.

V. But becauſe my onely deſign in this place is to raiſe Inferences, and not to frame new Arguments, I entreat the *Romaniſt* Reader, after a ſerious peruſal of my firſt Article, to reflect a moment upon his own Uncharity againſt ſo many Thouſands of His Majeſties Subjects, and other Nations, ſo commendable for their unſtain'd Life and Converſation; ſo acceptable to God, becauſe of their Virtue and Innocency. Let them,

them, I ſay, upon ſecond thoughts, repent of their former Uncharity, in condemning their Neighbors ſo inconſiderately, as *Schiſmaticks*, *Hereticks*, *Reprobates*. Let them deteſt from the bottom of their hearts this Unchriſtian Rigor and Severity; if perhaps upon ſuch groundleſs pretences they were perſuaded 'twas lawful to perſecute them by Treaſon, Fire and Sword, the deep ignorance they liv'd in could be as a Veil to the Enormity of their Crime: But after the peruſal of this Treatiſe they can no more pretend ignorance, they are told of their Errour, and ſufficiently

ly

ly inform'd of their former miſtakes.

VI. Neither can they with the leaſt appearance of Truth call *Apoſtates* ſuch as embrace *Proteſtancy*, ſince they retain ſtill the Faith of that Church which flouriſhed the firſt three Centuries after our Saviour's Birth, and is confeſſed by all Parties to have been the true Church of Chriſt. They admit not indeed the additional Articles of *Purgatory, Tranſubſtantiation, Image-worſhip, Invocation of Saints, &c.* for the grounds above laid. But on this account they are in no true ſenſe *Apoſtates*, becauſe *Apoſtaſie* is a defection

fection from the true Faith, and theſe Points are either groſs Errors, or, as a learned Divine of the *Engliſh* Church calls them, inferiour Truths, not deſtructive to Divine Faith, whether believ'd or denied; though they be, as I have inſinuated elſewhere, not a little prejudicial to true Virtue, and Chriſtian Piety.

VII. Raſhneſs or Imprudence can with as little juſtice be objected to ſuch as retreat from *Popery*. It has been demonſtrated by the conſent of *Romaniſts*, and ſelf-evident Principles they follow, by profeſſing *Proteſtancy* a pro-

probable and well-grounded opinion, That worſhipping God after the Proteſtant manner, they may attain to the end they were created for, which is eternal happineſs.

SECT.

SECT. 2.

Concluſions flowing naturally from the ſecond Principle of this method.

THE ſecond Principle was, *That Proteſtants may be ſaved more eaſily, and with greater ſecurity, than thoſe of the Romiſh Perſuaſion.* I ſhall not repeat here what I ſaid before, to explain, rather than to prove this ſelf-evident Truth, hence only I infer what is evident enough of it ſelf without any formal inference.

I. That

I. That *Romiſh Prieſts* are obliged not to endeavor, as they do, the Converſion, or rather Perverſion of *Proteſtants*, becauſe 'tis a ſin to withdraw any man from the ſafeſt way to Heaven.

II. The *Romaniſts* once convinc'd, as I hope they are, of this ſecond Principle, muſt of neceſſity renounce *Popery*, and profeſs *Proteſtancy*, there being an obligation incumbent to all men in matters of ſuch a high Concern, to chuſe that which is ſecureſt.

III. *Proteſtants* muſt ſtand ſtoutly to their own Religion,

on, and way of Divine Worſhip, and cannot, if they regard a good Conſcience, after this inſtruction turn *Romaniſts*, becauſe in ſo doing they would endanger their own Souls, by reaſon of the forementioned obſtacles to ſalvation in the profeſſion of *Popery*.

IV. All true *Proteſtants*, and more particularly Thoſe who by their Dignity, Office, and Imployment, are to watch over the Flock, muſt needs, if they will perform their duty, endeavour with all Charitable and Chriſtian means the Confirmation of *Proteſtants* in *Proteſtancy*, and

and the Converſion of their Popiſh Subjects from *Popery*, elſe they forfeit their Character and Miniſtry, as neglecting the ſpiritual concerns of Souls redeem'd by the precious blood of Chriſt, and committed to their truſt and vigilancy: If I have been my ſelf inſtrumental to the perverſion of ſeveral, while miſled by a blind Zeal, I ſaw things but under one light, I ſhall, at Conveniency, repair this Damage done to the Church, by writing in my ſpare-hours ſuch inſtructions as may be ſubſervient to their returning homewards, or uſeful to the converſion of others, and particularly

cularly my neareſt and deareſt Relations.

V. I ſhall put here a ſtop to my Pen, and an end to this Treatiſe, with a ſhort and charitable Advice to all His Majeſties Subjects of the *Romiſh* Perſuaſion.

Chari-

Charitable Advice to all His Majesties Subjects of the Romish Persuasion.

YOu have believ'd till now, as an Article of your Faith, That Protestants were all Reprobates, Hereticks, Schismaticks, and

many of them Apoſtates. Your Faith being ever an implicite one, and pinn'd on other mens ſleeves. You are more to be pitied for this groſs miſtake, than blam'd. You are not unlike, pardon me the freedom of this Parallel, to thoſe that are blind from their birth. You may induce ſuch men to believe any Falſhood you pleaſe, as for inſtance, that White is Black, or Black is White, be-

becauſe they want the uſe of their viſive Faculty, and ſolely relie on your Authority. You renounce not only to your reaſon, in favour of the pretended Council-Oracles. You hold not only your underſtanding captive when *Rome* ſpeaks, but you extinguiſh the cleareſt light thereof, in ſubmiſſion to her Deciſions, as if you were quite blind, and underſtood nothing, or as if Nature had not beſtowed

ed upon you an intellective Faculty, in order to diſcern good from evil, falſhood from truth, to try the ſpirits whence they are, whether of God or not. The *Romaniſts*, your Maſters, imitate thoſe ancient Heathens, who, to gain the Peoples eſteem and greater veneration for their Laws, ſaid confidently, They had received them immediatly from the gods: So they, to hold you in awe, and tyrannize over your

your underſtandings, as by a principle of Conſcience, call boldly whatever is decided in General Councils, Divine Oracles, Reveal'd Truths, Faith-Articles, which is the greateſt Artifice the Prince of Darkneſs could invent, to ſpread all the World over Error, Ignorance, and Superſtition. To avoid then your being ſeduc'd hereafter, make uſe of your Reaſon, ſince 'tis chiefly allow'd you for your at-

taining to the knowledge of ſaving Truths, peruſe often, and meditate frequently this Treatiſe, wherein you ſhall diſcover clearly,

I. That *Proteſtants*, you have been ſo averſe from hitherto, through preoccupation and ignorance, may be ſaved, as being true Members of the Univerſal Church, and neither Hereticks nor Schiſmaticks.

II. That

II. That they attain to Eternal Happineſs more eaſily, and with greater ſafety than *Romaniſts*, ſtanding to the Principles of *Popery*.

III. That the boaſted of Infallibility of General Councils is no Article of Faith amongſt *Roman-Catholicks*, but a meer politick deſign to domineer by this perſuaſion over all Nations, for the increaſe of temporal Concerns; and that

that as *Rome* of old ſubdued the World by force of Arms, ſhe may ſtill enſlave it by Religious Scruples, and ſtrong Fancies of the Divine Original of her Oracles, which was meant by the Poet that ſung thus:

Roma caput mundi, quicquid non poſſidet armis Religione tenet.

You have pretended formerly your Conſcience ſuffered you not to con-

conform to that Divine Worſhip now eſtabliſhed by Law in theſe three Kingdoms, you thought it not lawful to forſake *Popery*, and profeſs *Proteſtancy*, as being in your opinion nothing elſe but Hereſie, Schiſm, Apoſtaſie. This can be no more an Obſtacle to your Converſion, you are now informed to Conviction of the contrary, and of your incumbent Obligation to retreat from *Romaniſm*;

of

of two Evils, the leaſt is to be choſen; and of two ways to Heaven, that which is ſecureſt, in matters of this Concern all deliberation laid aſide, your Conſcience will preſs you to the ſureſt. So long as you endeavour your being inſenſible to her Checks, you pretend in vain to any true happineſs in this life, ſhe will ſound perpetually in your ears the extreme danger you are in through your own

own. fault, and as an inſeparable, terrifying, and threatning Ghoſt, diſturb your Repoſe by day and by night, *in all times, and in all places.*

Omnibus umbra locis aderit.

FINIS.